



## **LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES**

**May 13, 2009**

**BOARD PRESENT:** Brodsky, Dickerson, Grey-McKenzie, Kim, G. Lewis, O. Lewis, Neuman, Pandya

**STAFF PRESENT:** B. Parker Hamilton, Director; Eric Carzon, Business Manager; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

The Library Board meeting was convened by Chair Neuman at 7:10 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

Minutes from the April 1, 2009 meeting were approved as amended. March 11, 2009 minutes were approved.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Chair Neuman presented an overview of the agenda. There are four items of business: 1) the current status of the budget; 2) the annual meeting, which will include an update on the awards; 3) the report of the nominating committee; and 4) the LAC Handbook.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Two charettes have been held regarding the new Silver Spring Library. The first meeting was to get residents involved in the process and the second one was to talk about landscaping, grounds, etc. A decision is being made within the Department that this building is first and foremost a library. It is understood that the purple line and housing will be on the site, but at the end of the day, there needs to be a library where all can feel comfortable and adjacencies that are appropriate for the management and delivery of service.

On Thursday evening, Park and Planning is having a public hearing regarding the urban renewal plan. This plan must be reviewed and amended before a bridge connecting the Wayne parking garage and the library can be built. Library advocates have been asked to attend this hearing, and if they cannot attend, they have been asked to write letters. Clouding the public process was an announcement by Park and Planning opposing a pedestrian bridge. The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, reportedly, also opposed the building of the pedestrian bridge. Emails can be sent to Park and Planning: subject line - Urban Renewal Line, Public Hearing.

### **Budget Update – Eric Carzon**

There has been no formal proposal to reduce Libraries' budget. There was a possible reduction of \$233,000, a share of the retirement incentive program. When actual employees participated in the program, they were going to move monies back around. This reduction was approved because the Retirement Incentive Program (RIP) was not approved. The Management and Fiscal Policy Committee recommended deferral and the full Council accepted that recommendation this morning. Council wants a deeper level of plan; deeper long-term costs associated with the RIP. The Union supports the RIP and was very concerned that it was not approved. The ultimate fate of the RIP is undecided.

A late-breaking change of savings were attributed to departments, Libraries included, for the 311 program. Libraries attribution was \$65K. It is not clear what this money will be used for; the Department is investigating. MC311, a program the County has been working on wherein one can dial 311 and all manner of information questions could be answered; report potholes, street lights, etc. It is getting close to implementation.

At the Council work session, it was said that no changes were being proposed to the Executive's recommended budget for Libraries, but Council was reserving the right to make changes should other factors make it necessary to find additional funds. They are still waiting for an answer from the State of Maryland on the waiver of the education fee. There were two different deadlines set and Council thinks that May 15 is the applicable deadline.

Parker Hamilton stated that the 311 project has been in the works for about a year and a half, and the MC311 team is now beginning to meet with different departments to determine whether or not the work done by each can be a part of the 311 system. Libraries will argue that only a portion of what is done, mainly information put on our telephone outgoing message, could be answered by any County employee. When answering information questions, the State requires a Masters in Library Science (MLS) or completion of the Library Associate program. Therefore, only those with a MLS or State Library Associate training, by law, can answer information questions.

Changes in the State grants funds may not be seen by reading the budget. Libraries has had some of reductions that will not directly affect services. The State will not do any training grants this year and have reduced the service coordinator costs.

Meanwhile, there is some internal work being done based on what is known: workload is being reviewed; how to do centralized programming; how to manage in transition to a point where Administration will be making the majority, if not all, of the decisions regarding level of service and program delivery. Our role in making decisions about the work that is going to be done needs to be placed at the right level so frontline staff can have more time to focus on their core duties and responsibilities.

*Discussion regarding comments made by Councilmembers Knapp and Leventhal relating to staff workload, service hours and programming.*

The Library Board will receive correspondence from Friends of the Library (FOL). On July 14, 1999, the Montgomery County Library Board approved a motion to transfer the sum of approximately \$120,000 to the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc. for an endowment to enhance the public libraries of Montgomery County, Maryland. FOL will be

coming to the Board to talk about this \$120,000 endowment. The issue - what is to be done with that money? What was the intent of the endowment originally? Paulette Dickerson remembers the money was leftover from when the Library Board ran book sales. The thought at the time was that the money would be used to enhance Library service, training, travel, staff days, programming etc.

*Discussion regarding the paralleling of the Arts and Humanities Council to the FOLMC. Concern was voiced that all funding for the Libraries would be funneled through FOLMC. Parker Hamilton clarified the role of the FOLMC, a nonprofit, versus that of a County department. The FOL's main function is to enhance what Libraries do.*

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **Budget Strategy Evaluation, Hearings and Appointments with Councilmembers**

The message to the Councilmembers was that cutting staff would hurt Libraries the most.

- During the meeting with Council President Andrews, parking was discussed.
- Councilmember Leventhal is very supportive of Libraries and will recommend that Council go with the County Executive's recommendations.
- Councilmember Elrich's Chief of Staff met with the Board representatives. Mr. Elrich is not supporting the increase in any department's budget. Cutting Sunday hours and the signs in Wheaton were also discussed.
- The meeting with Councilmember Knapp began with him clarifying his earlier statements relative to the libraries. He said his comments were taken out of context, and that at this juncture everything is open for discussion. He wanted to know the current hours at Poolesville Library. He wanted us to list our priorities. We said our priority is to make sure we are fully staffed for the hours that we open. He feels the libraries should be more accessible to the transit systems. He likes the CountyStat program. The Library is the only organization that talks about plans for our young people.
- Parking was discussed during the meeting with Councilmember Floreen. She said votes were there to support the libraries budget. She also talked about the Silver Spring Library.

The Board was unable to meet with Councilmembers Ervin and Berliner (Councilmember Roger Berliner did hold a senior forum in Bethesda where he talked about libraries). Emails will be composed by Otto Lewis to send to Ms. Ervin and Mr. Berliner expressing the Board's regret that the Councilmembers' schedules did not allow them to meet.

This was Otto Lewis' third year doing Council meetings. He has learned it is hard to prepare because you never know what the Councilmembers are going to be interested in. It was suggested that during the fall the Board might want to spend more time meeting with Councilmembers. Each Board member should select a Councilmember and look at their record, follow their website and get their newsletter and talk to them occasionally.

Director Hamilton reminded the Board members of Mr. Leggett's position: he has said that the system can operate with the current hours and staffing as long as customers recognize there will be longer lines, some programming cut backs (some could be eliminated), and that library administration is building efficiencies and new models of service. She thanked the Board on the great job in getting the information to the Councilmembers.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **Legislative and Public Affairs – O. Lewis**

During Legislative Day, Kay Bowman, Otto Lewis, Dr. Gail Bailey and Lee Lowery met with Sarah Schenning, Legislative Assistant to Congressman Chris Van Hollen. Congressman Van Hollen was thanked for his support of libraries and especially for signing off on the Library Service and Technology Act and the Literacy for School Library programs.

The highlight was Lee Lowery speaking about the impact of the economy on her personal life. Her husband left her, and she was homeless. She used libraries to find a job and to obtain legal information. Libraries had a major impact on her life. She is now an LAC chair and works for the County. She was amazing.

### **Library Policy and Practices - Pandya**

There is no project being worked on at this time.

### **Annual MCLAB/LAC meeting - Kim, Krantz, Neuman**

The program is organized and has gone to the LACs. Please remind LACs to bring materials to display.

Niyati Pandya has volunteers from Germantown, Quince Orchard and Damascus. Some volunteers can act as greeters. We need an idea of how many people may require assistance with transportation and two or three drivers to pick up attendees at Shady Grove Metro. It would be good to have someone there to direct Metro Access drivers. Niyati Pandya will not be able to attend the meeting. She would like the greeters to wear a “May I help you?” badge or identifiable colors.

### **LAC Awards - Grey-McKenzie**

Several nominations were received: three for Member of the Year award and three for the Eleanor Abelard award. The question is what would the Board like to do since there were so few nominations? It was agreed to select awardees from the applications submitted. Dr. Neuman said ensure those who presented nominations be informed that their submissions were great but some items were missing. The recommendations of the Awards Committee were accepted by the Board. Parker Hamilton asked if winners would be notified ahead of time. An award piece will be added to the program.

How to get more people to apply? The Board members should encourage more LAC people to submit applications. Also, publicize the awards early and frequently.

### **LAC Handbook – Neuman**

Board members received the draft of the handbook via email. Please review and send any comments to Dr. Neuman by May 20. Hardcopies of the handbook will be printed for the second annual MCLB/LAC meeting. There will be one for each LAC.

Once all corrections have been made to the handbook, it will be posted electronically. The handbook should be reviewed on a cycle - every three to five years. Any critical information will be added as an addendum.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

The individual LAC pamphlets have been distributed to all LACs.

There are currently two vacancies on the Board.

The terms for the Chair and Vice Chair will be ending in September. Art Brodsky and Althea Grey McKenzie were nominated as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Both have accepted the nomination. There was no opposition; the new officers-elect were welcomed. Dr. Neuman will stay through the June 13 meeting and will introduce Art and Althea at the end of the meeting. Their duties will officially begin in September.

**LAC UPDATES-HIGHLIGHTS ONLY:**

No Reports

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

---

B. Parker Hamilton